

Message Text

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ACTION OES-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 ACDA-10 CIAE-00 INR-07 IO-13

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 EB-07 NRC-07 FEAE-00 DODE-00

ERDA-07 ERDE-00 NSF-02 CEQ-01 EPA-04 PA-02 PRS-01

USIA-15 SS-15 PM-04 /122 W
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FM USMISSION OECD PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASH DC PRIORITY 3075

UNCLAS OECD PARIS 22666

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: TPHY, OECD

SUBJECT: POSSIBLE MEDIA EXPLOITATION OF JUNE 1976

INCIDENT DURING OCEAN DISPOSAL OF NUCLEAR WASTES

REF: PACKER/HOYLE TELECON AUGUST 4, 1976

1. SUMMARY. NEA OFFICIAL HAS INFORMED MISSION THAT SWISS NEWSPAPER IS PUBLISHING EXPOSE OF JUNE 26, 1976 INCIDENT DURING OCEAN DISPOSAL OF LOW-LEVEL SOLID RADIOACTIVE WASTES. EDITOR OF SWISS NEWSPAPER HAS APPARENTLY LEARNED THROUGH U.S. CORRESPONDENT THAT U.S. MEDIA ARE PREPARING TO PUBLISH SENSATIONAL TREATMENT OF INCIDENT. ALTHOUGH U.S. IS NOT INVOLVED AND DOES NOT APPROVE OF OCEAN DISPOSAL TECHNIQUES, DEPARTMENT AND MISSION MIGHT FACE QUESTIONING, ESPECIALLY IN VIEW OF US JOINING NEA AS FULL MEMBER. END SUMMARY.

2. NATURE OF INCIDENT IS ALREADY KNOWN TO DEPARTMENT. OF OVER 5000 CONTAINERS, ONE FLOATED AND ANOTHER BURST ON IMMERSION. FLOATING CONTAINER WAS PUNCTURED, AND SANK. ALL MATERIAL FROM BURST CONTAINERS WAS RECOVERED. A THOROUGH TECHNICAL INVESTIGATION CONCLUDED THAT IMPROPER PACKING WAS RESPONSIBLE AND THAT NO RADIO-
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ACTIVE MATERIAL HAD BEEN RELEASED. PROBABILITY OF

SUCH INCIDENTS IN FUTURE WAS JUDGED NEGLIGIBLE BY EXPERTS FROM MEMBER COUNTRIES, THE BELGIAN COMPANY INVOLVED, AND THE NEA SECRETARIAT.

3. BACKGROUND MATERIAL PREPARED FOR ANSWERING PRESS INQUIRIES IS BEING FORWARDED TO THE DEPARTMENT (HOYLE) BY AIR POUCH. NO PRESS RELEASE WAS ISSUED BY OPERATIONS EXECUTIVE GROUP AT 15 JULY MEETING. SHOULD LATER CIRCUMSTANCES REQUIRE ISSUANCE OF PRESS RELEASE, THIS WILL BE DONE AFTER CONSULTATIONS BETWEEN NEA SECRETARIAT AND MEMBER COUNTRIES.

4. NEA SECRETARIAT HAS INFORMED MISSION THAT SWISS NEWSPAPER "DER BUND" IS PUBLISHING AN ARTICLE ON INCIDENT AND HAS LEARNED THROUGH ITS US CORRESPONDENT THAT US PRESS INTENDS TO TREAT INCIDENT IN A SENSATIONAL MANNER.

5. MISSION EXPECTS TO FACE QUESTIONS RELATING TO US POSITION ON OCEAN RADIOACTIVE WASTE DISPOSAL, US MEMBERSHIP IN NEA, US INFLUENCE ON CURTAILING OR TERMINATING THIS PRACTICE, AND NATURE OF RELATED ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS. IN THIS EVENT, MISSION WILL RESTATE US GENERAL POSITION WITH RESPECT TO OCEAN DISPOSAL OF RADIOACTIVE WASTES.
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Message Attributes

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